



STATE OF WASHINGTON 023-010  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-560*

November 30, 2023

ALTSA: AFH #2023-040  
ALTSA: ALF #2023-029  
ALTSA: CCRSS #2023-025  
ALTSA: ESF #2023-024  
ALTSA: ICF/IID #2023-034  
ALTSA: NH #2023-043

**RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS FOR SHORT-TERM STAFFING IN LONG-TERM CARE SETTINGS**

Dear Provider/Administrator/Superintendent:

The Department of Social and Health Services, Aging and Long-Term Support Administration continues to contract with a temporary nurse staffing agency to provide Rapid Response Staffing teams located in multiple geographic areas across the state. Team intent remains the same, to provide **short-term staffing support to providers to admit patients from acute care hospitals.**

The Rapid Response Teams are comprised of LPNs, and CNAs and located in counties/cities with the highest need for providers expediting patient discharges to residential care settings. In the event data shows a need for an additional Rapid Response Team in an area or in other areas, these teams may be relocated to respond to the need. As with former Rapid Response Teams, **deployed staff and teams have undergone screening to qualify for deployment in residential care settings.** The Department will be increasing the number of deployed staff during the winter virus season, December 2023 through February 2024.

Rapid Response Teams remain paid by state funds. **There will be *no charge* to the facilities or agencies for use of short-term nursing staff support through this program.**

We ask providers to continue to make their requests for short-term staffing support by completing a **Rapid Response Request** form (DSHS 02-716) and submitting it to the Department through the mailbox [rapidresponse@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:rapidresponse@dshs.wa.gov). Rapid Response Team 2 Management will continue to screen your requests based on three priorities (that have been updated):

- **Priority 1** is patient admissions from acute care hospitals to offload discharges and support providers.
- **Priority 2** is long-term care settings with seasonal outbreaks, e.g., COVID-19, RSV, Flu, or Norovirus + cases that require increased staffing to provide adequate care.
- **Priority 3** is for other urgent staffing needs to meet resident care and service delivery. Screening will be in order of prioritization.

We revised Priority 1 to remove incentive language and Priority 2 to reflect seasonal outbreaks in addition to COVID-19.

Rapid Response Managers will still contact providers to discuss requests, staff availability, need, and assignments. They will confirm what amount of staff resource is available and when. Contacts will be made in 24 hrs. DSHS will work with Rapid Response Managers to triage requests based

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on prioritization. The Managers will exchange staffing contact and agency contact information and instructions for assigned staff. If there are multiple staffing requests that need to be filled at the same time, providers will coordinate those requests with the Managers. Resources deployed will be based on need regionally and statewide.

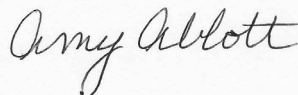
Please work with your staff to be prepared to orient the Rapid Response Teams to your facility, home, agency and residents and clients. These staff are accustomed to responding to temporary assignments. They will need orientation to facility, home, and agency operations on arrival, including medication administration systems, personal care or behavioral health care needs of the residents or clients, emergency response and contact information, and other vital information.

If providers do not have adequate PPE to provide to the deployed staff, they will be bring PPE kits, including fit tested N95 respirators. Direct any concerns about equipment, staff, and assignments to the Rapid Response Team Managers.

We know that contagious illnesses and outbreaks continue to have significant impacts on facilities, homes, and agencies as well as hospitals. We appreciate your willingness to partner and collaborate with us to create hospital capacity to serve citizens who need acute care, an emergent need in our state. We appreciate your service to all citizens who need your help. Thank you for this service.

For Rapid Response Team staffing questions, please contact Bett Schlemmer at [bett.schlemmer@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:bett.schlemmer@dshs.wa.gov) or 360.725.2404.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Abbott". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Amy Abbott, Director  
Residential Care Services

DSHS: *"Transforming Lives"*